

The Ecumenism of the Arena: An Exhaustive Analysis of Heterodox Martyrdom in the Ante-Nicene Era (c. 100–313 A.D.)

1. Introduction: The Fragmentation of the Blood Witness

The history of the Christian Church in the ante-Nicene period—spanning roughly from the close of the Apostolic Age (c. 100 A.D.) to the Edict of Milan (313 A.D.)—is frequently reconstructed through the lens of the "Great Church" or proto-orthodoxy. In this traditional narrative, a unified body of believers, adhering to the Rule of Faith and governed by a monarchical episcopate, stood as the sole bulwark against the tyrannical aggression of the Roman Empire. The blood of the martyrs, as Tertullian famously opined, was the seed of this specific Church.¹ However, the historical reality preserved in the margins of ecclesiastical histories, martyrologies, and archaeological findings reveals a far more fractured and complex landscape.

The ante-Nicene era was characterized by a fluid and often volatile theological environment. Before the Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.) codified the homoousian orthodoxy, Christianity was a kaleidoscope of competing Christologies, cosmologies, and ecclesial structures.² Communities later branded as "heretical"—Marcionites, Montanists, Novatianists, and various Gnostic schools—flourished alongside, and often outnumbered, their proto-orthodox rivals in specific regions.³ When the Roman state unleashed its sporadic police actions and eventually its systematic persecutions under Decius, Valerian, and Diocletian, it did not possess the theological literacy to distinguish between a bishop in communion with Rome and a presbyter of the Marcionite church. To the Roman proconsul, the crime was *atheism*—the refusal to worship the traditional gods—and the punishment was indiscriminate.¹

This report provides an exhaustive investigation into the prominent individuals belonging to these heterodox groups who were martyred by Rome prior to 313 A.D. It challenges the patristic assertion that heretics universally fled persecution or utilized docetic theology to evade the cross. Instead, the evidence demonstrates that schismatics and heretics not only died for the name of Christ but did so in numbers and with a fortitude that deeply unsettled the proto-orthodox hierarchy, forcing a theological crisis regarding the validity of "baptism by blood" outside the bounds of the institutional Church.

1.1 Defining "Heresy" and "Martyrdom" in the Pre-Constantinian

Context

To accurately analyze this subject, one must first define the parameters of "heresy" as it existed prior to the imperial enforcement of orthodoxy. In the second and third centuries, "heresy" (from the Greek *hairesis*, meaning "choice" or "school of thought") was a label applied polemically by rival Christian groups. Marcion of Sinope, for instance, did not view himself as a heretic but as the restorer of the true Pauline Gospel, untainted by Jewish legalism.⁴ Similarly, the Montanists referred to their movement as the "New Prophecy," viewing themselves as the spiritual elite of the Church rather than a breakaway sect.⁶

For the purpose of this report, "individuals later deemed to be Christian heretics" refers to those figures who:

1. Identified themselves as Christians.
2. Were executed by Roman authorities for their Christian confession.
3. Belonged to communities or held theological positions that were explicitly condemned by the proto-orthodox tradition (represented by figures like Irenaeus, Cyprian, and Eusebius) and subsequent Ecumenical Councils.

This definition encompasses three primary categories of martyrs:

- **Theological Heretics:** Those who held divergent views on the nature of God or Scripture (e.g., Marcionites, Gnostics).
- **Schismatics:** Those who held orthodox theology but separated from the catholic hierarchy over issues of discipline (e.g., Novatianists, Meletians).
- **Enthusiastic/Prophetic Movements:** Those condemned for unauthorized revelation or rigorism (e.g., Montanists).

1.2 The Roman Indifference to Sectarianism

The Roman legal system provided the stage upon which this "ecumenism of the arena" played out. From the correspondence of Pliny the Younger to Trajan (c. 112 A.D.) to the edicts of Diocletian (303 A.D.), the Roman concern was political loyalty and the *pax deorum* (peace of the gods).¹ The state viewed Christianity as a monolithic superstition. The theological nuances that divided a Marcionite (who believed the Creator was evil) from a Catholic (who worshipped the Creator) were invisible to the executioner. This indifference led to the striking historical phenomenon where orthodox saints and heretical leaders were burned on the same pyres, their ashes mingling in a union they fiercely rejected in life.

1.3 The Theological Crisis of the "False" Martyr

The existence of these martyrs posed a severe problem for the early Church Fathers. If the Holy Spirit was the agent who granted the strength to endure torture and death, the presence of Marcionite or Montanist martyrs implied that the Spirit was active in those sects. To counter this, Fathers like Cyprian of Carthage developed a rigorist theology of martyrdom: *extra*

ecclesiam nulla salus ("outside the Church there is no salvation"). Cyprian argued that "the baptism of blood" could not wash away the stain of schism. "He cannot be a martyr who is not in the Church," Cyprian wrote, asserting that such deaths were not crowns of victory but merely the "punishment of treachery".⁷ This report will demonstrate how this theological defensive posture influenced the recording (and often the suppression) of heretical martyrdoms in ecclesiastical history.

2. The Marcionite Martyrs: Denying the Creator, Dying for the Christ

Marcionism represents the most significant institutional rival to the Great Church in the second and third centuries. Established by Marcion of Sinope around 144 A.D., the Marcionite church was not a loose school of philosophy like the Gnostics but a fully organized counter-church with its own hierarchy of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, and its own canon of Scripture (the *Apostolikon* and the *Evangelion*).³

Marcionite theology was dualistic: it posited a sharp distinction between the God of the Old Testament (the Demiurge, a God of strict justice and creation) and the Alien God of the New Testament (the Father of Christ, a God of pure love and mercy).² Marcionites rejected the Old Testament and lived lives of strict asceticism, forbidding marriage and meat consumption to avoid propagating the Demiurge's material world. Despite their rejection of the material body as the work of an inferior god, Marcionites were renowned for their willingness to suffer martyrdom, a fact that baffled their orthodox opponents.⁸

2.1 Metrodorus: The Presbyter of Smyrna (c. 250 A.D.)

One of the most vividly documented instances of a heretical martyr is **Metrodorus**, a Marcionite presbyter executed in Smyrna during the Decian persecution. His death is recorded in the *Martyrdom of Pionius* (*Passio Pionii*), a text widely regarded by scholars as one of the few authentic, contemporary accounts of the Decian era.⁹

2.1.1 The Context of the Decian Persecution

In 250 A.D., Emperor Decius issued an edict requiring all inhabitants of the Empire to sacrifice to the gods and obtain a *libellus* (certificate) proving their loyalty. This was the first systematic, empire-wide persecution.¹ In Smyrna, a city with a vibrant Christian history dating back to Polycarp, the pressure was intense. The *Passio Pionii* records the arrest of Pionius, an orthodox presbyter, along with several companions.

2.1.2 The Trial and Confession

The narrative describes Pionius engaging in theological debates with Jews and pagans in

prison. However, when the time for execution arrived, the text introduces another figure. Pionius is brought to the stadium to be burned alive. The *Passio* explicitly states:

"He suffered in company with Metrodorus, a Marcionite priest".¹⁰

The Roman proconsul, indifferent to the schism, condemned both men for the same refusal to sacrifice. They were nailed to stakes. The physical arrangement of the execution is laden with symbolic meaning in the text: Pionius was placed on the right, and Metrodorus on the left.¹¹ This spatial positioning reflects the orthodox redactor's bias—placing the "true" martyr on the side of the sheep (the right) and the heretic on the side of the goats (the left)—yet the redactor could not erase the historical fact of Metrodorus's presence.

2.1.3 Theological Implications of Metrodorus's Death

Metrodorus's martyrdom serves as a critical counter-argument to the polemics of Tertullian and Irenaeus, who often claimed that heretics (particularly Gnostics and Marcionites) utilized docetism to avoid suffering.¹² If Christ did not truly suffer in the flesh (as Marcionites believed), why should his followers?

Metrodorus's death proves that Marcionite docetism did not lead to cowardice. On the contrary, Marcionite theology likely fueled his resistance. By refusing to sacrifice to the Emperor, Metrodorus was rejecting the entire apparatus of the Demiurge—the state, the law, and the fear of bodily death. For a Marcionite, the destruction of the flesh in the fire was the ultimate liberation from the evil material prison, a final return to the Alien God of Light. His death was not a validation of the Creator's world (as orthodox martyrdom was often framed) but a definitive rejection of it.

2.2 Asclepius: The Marcionite Bishop (310 A.D.)

Sixty years after Metrodorus, during the Great Persecution under Diocletian and Maximinus Daia, another high-ranking Marcionite appears in the historical record: **Asclepius**.

2.2.1 Eusebius's Ambivalent Record

Eusebius of Caesarea, the father of church history, records the martyrdom of Asclepius in his *Martyrs of Palestine*. The event took place in Caesarea Maritima on January 10 or 11, 310 A.D..¹³ Asclepius is identified as a **bishop** of the Marcionite church, indicating that the Marcionite hierarchy remained intact and visible well into the fourth century.³

Eusebius recounts that Asclepius was burned alive on the same pyre as Peter Apselamus (also known as Peter the Ascetic), an orthodox martyr from Anea.¹⁴ The visual of the two men—one orthodox, one heretical—consumed by the same flames is a potent symbol of the era.

2.2.2 "Zeal Without Knowledge"

Eusebius, struggling to reconcile Asclepius's heroism with his heresy, applies a Pauline critique to the bishop. He writes that Asclepius was possessed with "zeal for piety, as he supposed, but not according to knowledge" (*Rom. 10:2*).¹⁴ This phrase became the standard orthodox categorization for heretical martyrs: their courage was admitted, but their reward was denied. Eusebius could not omit Asclepius from the record—likely because the public nature of the execution made him a local hero—but he neutralized the theological threat by framing the bishop's death as a tragedy of ignorance rather than a triumph of faith.

2.3 The "Immense" Multitude of Marcionite Martyrs

Beyond these named individuals, the historical sources hint at a massive phenomenon. In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius mentions that the Marcionites produced "immense" numbers of martyrs.⁸ This adjective is significant. It suggests that in some regions, Marcionite martyrs may have outnumbered orthodox ones.

The Marcionite church's structure, which was "akin to the orthodox church" with bishops and presbyters³, made it an easy target for Roman authorities who sought to decapitate Christian leadership. Furthermore, the Marcionite refusal to engage with the "Jewish" roots of Christianity meant they could not claim the legal protection sometimes afforded to Jews (*religio licita*). They were a distinct, novel "third race," doubly vulnerable to Roman persecution.

Table 1: Comparative Theology of Martyrdom

Feature	Proto-Orthodox View	Marcionite View
View of the Body	Temple of the Holy Spirit; to be resurrected.	Material prison created by the Demiurge; to be discarded.
Motivation	Imitation of Christ's passion; witness to the truth of the Incarnation.	Rejection of the Creator's authority; liberation of the spirit from matter.
Attitude to State	Respect for authority (Rom 13), but refusal of idolatry.	View of the State as an agent of the hostile Creator/Demiurge.
Martyrological Record	Extensive martyrologies (e.g., <i>Acts of Perpetua, Polycarp</i>).	"Immense" numbers, largely suppressed or lost in orthodox histories.

3. The Montanist Martyrs: The New Prophecy and the Rush to Death

Montanism, known to its adherents as the "New Prophecy," erupted in Phrygia in the mid-second century (c. 156–172 A.D.).¹ Led by the prophet Montanus and the prophetesses Priscilla and Maximilla, the movement claimed that the Paraclete (Holy Spirit) was delivering new revelations that superseded or completed the apostolic tradition.

Montanism was characterized by rigorous asceticism, a prohibition on second marriages, and an intense eschatology that predicted the New Jerusalem would descend at Pepuza.⁶ Crucially, the movement fostered a "cult of martyrdom." Montanist oracles explicitly forbade flight from persecution, commanding believers to stand firm and expose themselves to the authorities.¹⁵ This "voluntary martyrdom" was a point of contention with the Great Church, which generally advised prudence and flight if possible (following Matthew 10:23).

3.1 Perpetua and Felicity (Carthage, 203 A.D.): The Contested Saints

Vibia Perpetua, a noblewoman, and Felicity, her slave, are among the most revered martyrs in Christendom. Executed in the amphitheater of Carthage in 203 A.D., their *Passio* is a masterpiece of early Christian literature. However, a overwhelming consensus of modern scholarship identifies them and their companions (Saturus, Revocatus, Saturninus, and Secundulus) as adherents of the New Prophecy.¹⁶

3.1.1 The Evidence for Montanism in the *Passio*

While the later church sanitized their memory, the internal evidence of the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* is distinctly Montanist:

1. **The Preface:** The redactor (often identified as Tertullian, a known Montanist) opens with a defense of "new visions" and "new prophecies," arguing that the Spirit's power is not limited to the apostolic past but is "present" now. This is a direct polemic against the anti-Montanist position.¹⁸
2. **Charismatic Authority:** Perpetua displays a spiritual authority that transcends the clergy. In her visions, she intercedes for her dead brother Dinocrates and fights the devil directly as a spiritual warrior. The local bishop is absent or secondary to the authority of the "spirituals" (the martyrs).¹⁹
3. **Ecstatic Prophecy:** The text emphasizes the immediate guidance of the Spirit, a hallmark of Montanist piety. Saturus's vision of heaven involves the rebuke of a bishop, asserting the moral superiority of the martyrs over the hierarchy.

If Perpetua and Felicity were Montanists, they represent the most high-profile "heretics" martyred by Rome. Their inclusion in the orthodox canon of saints is a historical anomaly,

likely due to the sheer power of their narrative and the fact that the rupture between Montanism and Orthodoxy in North Africa was not yet absolute in 203 A.D. They died at a moment when the New Prophecy was a faction *within* the Church, rather than a sect *outside* it, though their theology was undoubtedly that of the "Phrygians."

3.2 Macedonia: The Montanist Confessor (Smyrna, 250 A.D.)

Returning to the *Martyrdom of Pionius*, we encounter another explicit sectarian: **Macedonia**. Unlike Perpetua, whose affiliation is deduced from text, Macedonia is explicitly labeled a "member of the Montanist sect" by the author of the *Passio*.⁹

3.2.1 The "Mixed" Prison

Macedonia is arrested alongside the orthodox Pionius and the Marcionite Metrodorus. Her presence illustrates the theological diversity of the persecuted community in Smyrna. The text describes her as a woman from the village of Karine.

While the *Passio* focuses on Pionius's theological dominance, Macedonia's fate was identical. She was imprisoned, tortured, and ultimately executed (though the specific mode of her death is less detailed than Pionius's burning).²⁰ Her inclusion in the narrative serves a literary purpose for the orthodox author—showing Pionius as the leader of all Christians, even the erring ones—but historically, it confirms that Montanist women were active, visible, and targeted by the Decian persecution.

3.3 Theodotus of Ancyra: The Ambiguous "Prize-Winner"

The figure of **Theodotus of Ancyra** (martyred c. 303–312 A.D.) presents a complex case of sectarian overlap. Orthodox hagiography remembers him as a saint who retrieved the bodies of seven martyred virgins. However, epigraphic evidence from Asia Minor complicates this picture.

3.3.1 The Montanist Inscription

An inscription found in Temenothyrai (modern Uşak, Turkey), a stronghold of Montanism, commemorates a "prize-winning martyr" (martyr athlophoros) named Theodotus.²¹ Scholar William Tabbernee and others argue that this inscription likely refers to Theodotus of Ancyra, venerated by a Montanist community.²²

This suggests one of two possibilities:

1. Theodotus was actually a Montanist bishop or leader whose memory was later "captured" and sanitized by the orthodox tradition (similar to Perpetua).
2. He was an orthodox martyr who was so revered that local Montanists (who valued martyrdom above all else) adopted him into their own cultic worship.

Given the Montanist obsession with martyrdom and their strong presence in Galatia and Phrygia, Theodotus represents the blurred lines between the sects during the Great Persecution. To the Romans, he was simply a leader of the illegal cult; to the Montanists, a

hero of the New Prophecy; to the Orthodox, a saint.

3.4 The "Phrygian" Zealots and Voluntary Martyrdom

The Montanist theology of martyrdom led to incidents of mass voluntary surrender. In Church History V.16, Eusebius quotes an anti-Montanist writer who claims that Montanus and Maximilla hanged themselves (a likely slander), but also notes the Montanist boast that they have "many martyrs".⁶

However, the orthodox tradition often mocked this zeal. In the Martyrdom of Polycarp, a character named Quintus the Phrygian forces himself forward to the tribunal, only to turn coward and sacrifice when he sees the beasts. This narrative was likely a polemic constructed to discredit Montanist voluntary martyrdom as spiritually hollow.²⁴ Yet, the historical reality of figures like Macedonia and the likely Montanist allegiance of Perpetua proves that their "zeal" was often matched by a fortitude that equaled the orthodox.

4. Novatian: The Martyrdom of the Rigorist Antipope

Novatian (c. 200–258 A.D.) stands as a towering figure in the third-century Church—a scholar, the first Roman theologian to write in Latin, and the leader of a massive schism that lasted for centuries.²⁵ His movement, the Novatianists (or *Cathari*, "The Pure"), separated from the Catholic Church over the issue of the *lapsi*—those who had sacrificed to idols during the Decian persecution. Novatian argued that the Church had no power to forgive the sins of idolatry, murder, or adultery; such sinners could only be left to the judgment of God.

4.1 The Schism and the Antipapacy

In 251 A.D., following the death of Pope Fabian, the Roman clergy elected the lenient Cornelius as Bishop of Rome. Novatian, rejecting Cornelius's laxity toward the lapsed, had himself consecrated as rival Bishop of Rome, becoming the second antipope in history.²⁷ The schism split the church from Rome to Carthage to Asia Minor.

4.2 The Martyrdom Discovery: *Novatiano Beatissimo Martyri*

For centuries, ecclesiastical historians debated Novatian's fate. His arch-rival, Cyprian of Carthage, attacked him relentlessly as a "wolf" and a "deserter".⁷ The orthodox historian Socrates Scholasticus (writing much later) claimed Novatian died a martyr under Valerian.²⁵

This debate was largely settled in 1932 by a stunning archaeological find. In a cemetery near San Lorenzo in Rome (specifically the *coemeterium Novatiani*), archaeologists discovered a tomb inscription reading:

"NOVATIANO BEATISSIMO MARTYRI GAUDENTIUS DIAC FEC"

(To Novatian, the most blessed martyr, the deacon Gaudentius made this).²⁸

4.3 Analysis of the Inscription and Death

This inscription provides definitive, contemporary (or near-contemporary) evidence that:

1. **Novatian was Martyred:** The title *Martyr* is explicit.
2. **Date:** He likely suffered during the persecution of Valerian (258 A.D.), the same wave of violence that claimed Pope Sixtus II and St. Lawrence in Rome, and Cyprian in Carthage.²⁹
3. **Veneration:** The superlative *Beatissimo* ("Most Blessed") indicates a thriving cult of the martyr among his followers.

4.4 The Irony of Shared Martyrdom

The martyrdom of Novatian presents a profound historical irony. In 258 A.D., the Roman state decapitated the leadership of the Christian community. In Carthage, Cyprian (the champion of unity) was beheaded. In Rome, Novatian (the champion of purity) was likely beheaded or executed.

Both men died for the same Trinitarian faith (Novatian's *De Trinitate* is a fierce defense of Christ's divinity against Adoptionists). Both died refusing to sacrifice to the Emperor. Yet, Cyprian died believing Novatian was a "son of perdition" outside the Church, while Novatian died believing the Catholic hierarchy was polluted by compromise. The Roman sword made no distinction between the Catholic and the Catharist; they were united in death in a way they refused to be in life.

5. Lucian of Antioch: The Teacher of Heretics and Sainted Martyr

Lucian of Antioch (c. 240–312 A.D.) occupies a unique space in this investigation: he is a "prominent individual later deemed to be a heretic" (specifically, the progenitor of Arianism) who is simultaneously venerated as a canonical saint by the Orthodox and Catholic Churches.³⁰

5.1 The "Father of Arianism"

Lucian was a brilliant presbyter and head of the School of Antioch. However, his theology was deeply controversial. He taught a form of Subordinationism—the belief that the Son is a created being, inferior to the Father. This theology was the direct intellectual ancestor of Arianism. Indeed, Arius himself, along with major Arian leaders like Eusebius of Nicomedia, were students of Lucian and proudly called themselves "Syallucianists" (Fellow Lucians).³² Furthermore, Lucian was in formal schism from the Church of Antioch for nearly two decades (c. 270–290 A.D.), refusing communion with three successive orthodox bishops due to his sympathy for the deposed heretic Paul of Samosata.³³

5.2 The Martyrdom at Nicomedia (312 A.D.)

Despite his schismatic past and heterodox theology, Lucian was arrested during the persecution of Maximinus Daia. Brought to Nicomedia, he delivered a famous defense of the faith (*Apologia*) before the Emperor. He was imprisoned for nine years and eventually executed on January 7, 312 A.D. accounts vary on the method—some say starvation, others beheading or drowning.³²

5.3 The Whitewashing of a Martyr

Lucian's martyrdom effected a "rehabilitation" of his reputation. St. John Chrysostom and St. Jerome later praised him, allowing his martyrdom to eclipse his theological errors. However, strictly speaking, he fits the criteria of this report: a man whose teachings were condemned as the root of the greatest heresy (Arianism) and who lived much of his life in schism, yet was martyred by Rome. His case illustrates the redemptive power the early Church attributed to martyrdom—it could turn a "Father of Heresy" into a Saint, provided he died well.

6. The Gnostic Absence and Other Sectarian Figures

6.1 Why Gnostics Rarely Died

In stark contrast to the Marcionites, Montanists, and Novatianists, the various Gnostic sects (Valentinians, Basilidians, Sethians) are conspicuously absent from the rolls of martyrs. This was largely due to Gnostic theology:

1. **Anti-Materialism:** Gnostics believed the material world was the creation of an evil or ignorant Demiurge. The body was a "tunic" to be discarded. To suffer for the body was foolishness.
2. **Critique of Martyrdom:** Gnostic texts like the *Testimony of Truth* (found at Nag Hammadi) explicitly mock orthodox Christians who seek martyrdom, claiming they are merely offering human sacrifices to the Demiurge (who delights in blood) rather than serving the true, spiritual Father.¹²
3. **Docetism:** If Christ only *appeared* to have a body and did not truly suffer on the cross (as Basilides taught, claiming Simon of Cyrene died in Jesus' place), then the disciple has no mandate to suffer physically.

Consequently, Gnostics often permitted the denial of Christ before tribunals to save the "spiritual seed" within, leading to a survival rate that infuriated their orthodox neighbors.

6.2 Theodotus of Byzantium (The Tanner): The Apostate

To contrast with the true martyrs, one must mention **Theodotus the Tanner**, the founder of Adoptionism (the belief Jesus was a mere man tested and adopted by God). Active in Rome c.

190 A.D., he was persecuted but explicitly *escaped* martyrdom by denying Christ. When confronted by the Church, he argued he had not denied God, but only a "man" (since he believed Jesus was human).³⁶ This sophistry stands in sharp relief to the Marcionite Metrodorus or the Antipope Novatian, who held heterodox views but possessed the fortitude to die for them.

7. Synthesis and Conclusion: The Blood of *Which* Church?

The investigation yields a definitive conclusion: The "Army of Martyrs" in the ante-Nicene era was not a uniform phalanx of proto-orthodox believers. It was a motley coalition of rivals.

7.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Impact

While the orthodox Church preserved the most detailed records (creating a survivorship bias), the evidence of "immense" Marcionite martyrs and the fervor of the Montanists suggests that in many provinces—particularly Asia Minor and North Africa—a substantial proportion of those executed were sectarians.

- **Marcionites** died to defy the Creator.
- **Montanists** died to hasten the Eschaton.
- **Novatianists** died to preserve Purity.
- **Catholics** died to witness to the Incarnation.

7.2 The State's Perspective

To the Roman Empire, these distinctions were irrelevant. The persecutions were a blunt instrument that struck the entire spectrum of Christianity. This shared suffering forced the "Great Church" to grapple with the uncomfortable reality that their theological enemies were capable of the supreme act of Christian love (John 15:13).

7.3 Final Verdict

Prominent individuals later deemed heretics who were martyred by Rome include:

1. **Metrodorus** (Marcionite Presbyter)
2. **Asclepius** (Marcionite Bishop)
3. **Macedonia** (Montanist)
4. **Novatian** (Antipope/Schismatic)
5. **Lucian of Antioch** (Proto-Arian/Schismatic)
6. **Perpetua & Felicity** (Likely Montanists)

These figures demonstrate that while the victors wrote the history, they did not die alone. The

arena was a place of ecumenical suffering, where the theological boundaries enforced by bishops dissolved in the fires of the Roman state.

Table 2: Confirmed Heterodox Martyrs of the Ante-Nicene Era

Name	Role/Sect	Date	Location	Persecution	Source Evidence
Metrodorus	Presbyter (Marcionite)	c. 250	Smyrna	Decian	<i>Passio Pionii</i> ⁹
Macedonia	Confessor (Montanist)	c. 250	Smyrna	Decian	<i>Passio Pionii</i> ⁹
Novatian	Antipope (Novatianist)	258	Rome	Valerian	Tomb Inscription ²⁵
Asclepius	Bishop (Marcionite)	310	Caesarea	Diocletianic	Eusebius, <i>Martyrs of Pal.</i> ¹⁴
Lucian	Presbyter (Proto-Arian)	312	Nicomedia	Maximinus	Eusebius/C hrysostom ³²
Theodotus	Leader (Montanist?)	c. 303	Ancyra	Diocletianic	Inscription <i>Martys Athlophoros</i> ²¹

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